Secure Yet Scrutinized – 2 Timothy 2:11-13

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I. Introduction

Salvation from hell is a free gift received through faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ. [1] The regenerate person is secure in his possession of eternal life from the moment of saving faith because of the faithfulness of God to him.[2] In stark contrast, true, vibrant discipleship involves a costly commitment of a believer's life, expressed through steadfast obedience to Jesus Christ.[3] The enduring disciple is promised special reward in Christ's future kingdom because of his faithfulness to God.[4]

These fundamental truths are proclaimed by the Apostle Paul in 2 Tim 2:11-13. This passage revolves around four problematic conditional clauses (if…[then] constructions). In these verses Paul maintains that a believer in Christ is secure in his ownership of eternal life, yet his Christian life will be scrutinized by the Lord and special privilege and reward will be conferred on him only if he is found to have been faithful.

II. Secure Salvation – 2 Timothy 2:11

Introductory Formula

Every Christian who at times has doubted his own salvation should memorize and meditate on this comforting verse. Verse 11 begins with the introductory formula, "It is a trustworthy statement:" (*pistos ho logos*).[5] It has often been noted that this attestation, unique to the Pastoral Epistles (1 Tim 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim 2:11; Titus 3:8) focuses special attention on the series of conditional clauses that follow in vv 11-13.[6]

Conditional clauses are made up of two major subclauses—an "if clause" and a "conclusion clause." These two subclauses are technically termed the "protasis" and the "apodosis" respectively. This article will proceed by separately considering the if clause (the protasis) and the *conclusion* clause (the apodosis) of v 11.

The "If Clause" of Verse Eleven

The conditional clause of v 11 begins with the subclause, "For if we died with Him…"[7] The verb translated "we died with Him" (*synapethanomen*) is in the aorist tense. The aorist tense here may be regarded as culminative in aspect. Dana and Mantey define this category as follows: "The aorist is employed in this meaning when it is wished to view an event in its entirety, but to regard it from the viewpoint of its existing results."[8] Specifically, here in 2 Tim 2:11 this verb refers to the believer's identification with the death of Christ at the moment of salvation.[9] Paul expresses the same basic idea in Rom 6:5: "For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." Similarly, Paul says in Rom 6:8: "Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him." The verb synapethanomen here in 2 Tim 2:11 could perhaps better be rendered "we have died with Him."[10] At the moment of the new birth, the old self, i.e., the person one was before salvation, ceases to exist; "he died." Regenerate people are transformed into new creatures in Christ (2 Cor 5:17).[11] Their old selves are dead and their new lives are now "hidden with Christ in God" (Col 3:3). Like Paul, all believers "have been crucified (i.e., "have died") with Christ" (Gal 2:20).

The "Conclusion Clause" of Verse Eleven

The conditional clause of v 11 concludes with the subclause, "We shall also live with Him." The verb *syzesomen* is a predictive future, affirming that this life with Christ will surely commence at some time in the future. The person who has trusted Christ as Savior (and who has thus died with Him) will ultimately live in Christ's presence.[12] For Paul this future life with Christ began at the moment of his physical death.

The anticipation of living in Christ's presence was never far from Paul's consciousness (see 2 Cor 5:5-7; Phil 1:23; 1 Thess 1:10) and was clearly a major motivating factor for him to remain steadfastly faithful to the Lord despite the many difficulties and stresses he had to face in his Christian life.

Summary

If we have died with Christ—and every believer has—then we will also live with Him! Verse 11 is an uncompromising statement of the absolute certainty that every believer possesses of living with Christ in the future. Nothing in the remainder of this passage (or any other passage of Scripture, for that matter) will contradict this clearly stated axiom.[13] Therefore, any interpretation of the following three conditional clauses which denies complete assurance to all believers of future life in the presence of Christ must be recognized as unbiblical.

III. Scrutinized for Possible Reward – 2 Timothy 2:12

While v 11 was a statement of certainty, v 12 is a statement of contingency. The Christian will definitely live with Christ in the future. However, *he may or may not*receive special commendation and reward from the Lord at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Verse 12, correctly understood, is motivational, designed to encourage Timothy (and by application, every believer) to be consistently faithful to the Lord in his Christian life. In context, Paul has been exhorting his friend to be a good "soldier," "athlete," and "farmer" for the Lord (2 Tim 2:3-6), following the ultimate example of Christ Himself (2 Tim 2:8) and the immediate example of the Apostle Paul (2 Tim 2:9, 10). Verses 11-13, but especially v 12, fit nicely into this contextual setting in affirming that the quality of a believer's Christian life on earth will affect the quality of his future eternal experience with Christ.[14]

The two conditional clauses of v 12 describe opposing extremes of Christian conduct, *endurance for Christ and denial of Christ*. To be properly understood it is imperative that these two statements be interpreted in light of the immediately preceding declaration of v 11. The sinner who has trusted Christ, has died with Him, and will also live with Him in the future. Verse 11 thus makes it absolutely clear that the future destination of

believers is not in doubt. The issue of a believer's living a life of enduring fidelity to his Lord, however, is very much in question. Will the Christian steadfastly live in submission to Christ or will he consistently deny Christ's Lordship and its implications over his or her life? The Word of God is clear that not all believers faithfully live for their Lord while on earth (Acts 19:18-19; 1 Cor 3:1-3; 11:30; Gal 5:16-21; 1 Tim 1:19-20; 2 Tim 2:17-18; Heb 4:1-2, 11).[15]

Only those Christians who demonstrate an enduring, persistent faithfulness to the Lord in this life will receive special reward in the next. Carnal believers who live selfishly, denying Christ's Lordship over their lives, will be denied special commendation when their Christian experience is evaluated by the Lord.

The First Conditional Clause of Verse Twelve

"If we endure, we shall also reign with Him." Surely this is one of the grandest promises of the entire Bible. The verb rendered "we endure" is in the present tense. The present tense here has a gnomic or customary force—making a basic general statement describing the overall character of a believer's life. It does not have in view a life of perfect sinlessness, which is, of course, impossible (1 John 1:8, 10). Rather it refers to a life of consistent faithfulness.

Clearly the concept of endurance mentioned here ("if we endure") is a crucial one in v 12 and in this entire passage. An appreciation of its overall Pauline and NT usage is vital in order to fully understand its function here in 2 Tim 2:12.

The verb *hypomeno* ("to endure") and the related noun *hypomene* ("endurance") are often used in exhortations to believers. In Rom 12:12 Paul encouraged the believers in Rome to be "persevering [i.e., enduring] in tribulation." Interestingly, this exhortation is preceded by the injunction to "rejoice in hope." This is not surprising, because hope and steadfast endurance are of necessity linked (1 Thess 1:3 and Jas 5:11). A believer's confident expectation of one day being in the presence of Jesus (his hope) is the basis of

steadfast endurance in the midst of the difficulties of this present life on earth. This same interrelationship between hope and endurance is found in 2 Tim 2:11, 12. Verse 11 affirms the believer's secure hope, and then v 12 calls the believer to a life of endurance for Christ here and now while on earth.

Endurance is an essential component of a "worthy walk" (Col 1:11; Rom 5:3, 4; Jas 1:3, 4). It is a demonstration of the Christian's love for the Lord (compare 1 Cor 13:7 with Jas 1:12). Endurance involves the believer following the example of the life of Christ, who endured, remaining faithful to the Father's will even to the point of going to the cross (1 Pet 2:20-23; Heb 12:2, 3; see also Phil 2:8). Endurance is often seen and commended in the NT. Good examples of steadfast endurance include Paul himself (2 Tim 2:10; 3:10), older men in the local church (Titus 2:2), the Ephesians (Rev 2:2, 3), the Thyatirans (Rev 2:19), the Philadelphians (Rev 3:10), and Tribulation martyrs (Rev 13:10; 14:12).

Special commendation and reward is promised to believers who faithfully endure for the Lord. James 1:12 mentions "the crown of life" which will be bestowed upon Christians who endure for Christ in the face of especially difficult trials. Matthew 16:24-27 (cf. Mark 8:34-38 and Luke 9:23-26) can be best understood if taken in reference to future acknowledgment and reward for the believer who "saves his life" from the degradation and temporal death-dealing effects of personal sin.[16] Second Peter 1:5-7 lists several character qualities, including endurance, which if manifested in the Christian's life will cause his entrance into Christ's Kingdom to be "abundantly supplied" (i.e., richly rewarded). Heb 10:36 (see also 6:12) teaches that endurance is necessary in order to receive "the promises which, according to the argument of Hebrews, has to do with promises that steadfastly faithful believers will be special partners (*metachoi*) of Christ during His millennial reign on the earth.[17] Examining carefully, then, the NT data, one becomes aware of the basic principle that endurance for Christ in the life of the believer will lead to that believer's receiving special reward over and above the experience of eternal life with Christ.[18]

Second Timothy 2:12a echoes this basic truth, because it states that the believer who is faithful "shall also reign with Him [Christ]." While all believers will enter Christ's Kingdom (v 11, "we shall live with Him"), only those who are consistently faithful in their Christian experience will also reign with Jesus. The verb*symbasileusomen*, rendered "we shall also reign with Him," means "to rule as king with someone."[19] It

refers to possessing a special place of authority in Christ's millennial administration. This exciting possibility is the same truth taught in the parable of the *minas* by Jesus Himself (Luke 19:11-27). The Lord used this story to illustrate the principle that faithful service for the Master will ultimately result in His conferring various levels of governmental authority upon reliable believers, consistent with the individual's level of faithfulness, when He returns to establish His Kingdom. In Matt 19:29 the Lord Jesus promised Peter that he and the other disciples who had left everything to steadfastly follow Him: "in the regeneration [Millennium] when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne you also will sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." In the next verse Christ affirmed the general principle that every believer who has displayed an enduring commitment to walk with Him will receive "many times as much" in rewards (see also Luke 22:24-30; Matt 16:27). Likewise, in Rev 2:26, Jesus declared that believers "who keep" His "deeds to the end" will receive special millennial "authority over the nations.[20]

The Second Conditional Clause of Verse Twelve

"If we deny Him, He will also deny us." The second conditional clause of v 12 describes what will happen to the Christian who fails to live a consistent life of faithful endurance for Christ. If a believer "denies Christ" by not remaining steadfast for Him, he will in turn be denied the reward of "reigning with Him." The verb rendered "(if) we deny Him" is a present tense form of *arneomai*.[21] Like its polar opposite "(if) we endure" in the first conditional clause of v 12, it has a gnomic or customary force. It describes the general overall character of a believer's experience. Link and Tiedtke, in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, delineate the meaning of this verb as follows: "Generally*arneomai* means to fall back from a previous relationship with him into unfaithfulness…. The opposite of this denial is 'to hold fast' (Rev 2:13), or 'to be faithful' (2:10)."[22] They further state that it is used to describe a "failure in discipleship."[23]

That it is possible for believers to "deny Christ" is clear in the NT. Peter and the other Apostles (see Matt 26:35) on one infamous occasion blatantly denied their Lord (Matt 26:70; Mark 14:68, 70; Luke 22:57; John 18:25, 27).[24] Denial of Christ by a believer need not be limited necessarily to such dramatic settings, but can involve simple refusal to shoulder one's biblical responsibilities in any area. This is illustrated in 1 Tim 5:8,

which warns that the believer who neglects to provide for his own family has in effect "denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever" Specifically in 2 Tim 2: 12b the denial in view is not a single act of denial of sinful selfishness but is rather descriptive of a general failure or breakdown in discipleship.[25]

If we fail to live a consistent life of discipleship then "He also will deny us." In describing the Lord's denial of the unfaithful believer, Paul again uses a form of*arneomai* here meaning "to refuse, to disdain."[26] How will Christ deny the unfaithful believer? Or to put the question another way: What and how will He*refuse* the unfaithful believer? First the interpreter must remember that this passage has already established the fact that every believer will live with Christ (v 11). Additionally, Paul has also affirmed that those believers who faithfully endure in their Christian experience will receive special rewards and prerogatives in Christ's Kingdom (they "will reign with Him"). In context then, the denial spoken of here has to do with the Lord's denying the unfaithful believer the privilege of intimate, high-level interaction with Him in governing the millennial state.[27] First Corinthians 3:15 sheds additional light on the negative consequences of such denial because it indicates that the unfaithful, unfruitful believer will be denied reward at the Judgment Seat of Christ, "*but* he himself shall be saved" (i.e., the unrewarded believer will still "live with Christ").[28]

Summary

The warning given in v 12 to believers who fail to endure in a life of fruitful fellowship is a solemn one indeed, but it should not be made more somber than it actually is. This caution does not threaten the unfaithful believer with loss of future life with Christ. It does, however, warn that the consequences of unfaithfulness in the Christian life include the forfeiture of future reward. As always, the principle of evaluation (not salvation from hell) according to works comes into play (see Matt 16:27; 1 Cor 3:13; 2 Cor 5:10; Rev 22:12). Shameful living as a child of God will be recognized as such when the Lord personally assays the quality of each believer's life on earth (Rom 14:10-12).

IV. Still Secure in Spite of Scrutiny (2 Timothy 2:13)

Verse 13 is a reaffirmation of the comforting and foundational truth of this passage that "we shall live with Him" (v 11). The solemn reference to possible major failure by the Christian ("if we deny Him") and the serious consequence ("He also will deny us") in the previous verse demands a reassuring word. Many commentators have erroneously interpreted v 13 to be merely a restatement of the second conditional clause of v 12.[29] Thus they understand v 13 as meaning, "If we are faithless" (i.e., if we deny Him), He stays "faithful" in the sense that He will certainly carry out the threat of v 12 ("He will deny us"). This writer agrees with Barrett that it is inconceivable that Paul would appeal to God's *faithfulness* as the basis of a *threat*![30]

Correctly understood, v 13 is designed to give assurance to (even fallen) believers without encouraging them to fall (or to stay fallen).[31] This verse affirms the pivotal truth that the believer is both saved and secure based on God's faithfulness to him, not based on his faithfulness (or lack thereof) to God. While it is important to remember that v 13 does nothing to dilute the stern warning of v 12, it primarily functions to affirm the absolute security of all believers based on the absolute fidelity to them of their saving God.

The "If Clause" of Verse Thirteen

The conditional clause of v 13 begins with the subclause, "If we are faithless…" It is crucial to recognize that the verb rendered "(if) we are faithless" in this context describes unfaithfulness in the lives of regenerate people, not a lack of saving faith.[32] This same verb is found in ancient secular documents describing "disloyal soldiers" (i.e., not soldiers who disbelieve their sovereign but rather those who disobey him).[33] Here in a broad context in which Paul has specifically exhorted Timothy to be a faithful "soldier" for Christ (2 Tim 2:3, 4), the use of this verb is especially appropriate. Paul well recognized that on the battlefield of spiritual combat it is possible for soldiers of Christ to go AWOL.

The "Conclusion Clause" of Verse Thirteen

The conditional clause of v 13 concludes with the subclause, "He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself." The wonderful truth of this portion of Scripture is that even the unfaithful believer, who is a disloyal soldier of Christ, is assured of future life with his ever-faithful Commander-in-Chief. The Christian's security rests not in his own word, promises, or performance, but rather on God's Word, God's promises, and God's performance. The unfaithful believer is assured that despite his failures, "He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself." The contrast here could not be more graphic! While it is (regrettably) possible for the believer to be unfaithful to Christ, Christ *cannot* be unfaithful to the believer.[34] Christ remains faithful to His promise that the one who believes in Him possesses eternal life securely (John 3:15-18; 6:39,40; 6:47; 10:26-29). This fidelity is in no way predicated upon the believer's worthiness, either before or after receiving eternal life. It is based solely upon Christ's inherent faithfulness to His own nature and character. Hodges has well said:

> If we Christians were "faithless," this in no way affected His loyalty to us. Every guarantee that had been made to us in grace would still be ours, regardless of our lack of faith or fidelity…. "The gifts and the calling of God" were still "irrevocable" (Rom 11:29).
>
> For Him to act otherwise toward us, whatever form our faithlessness might take, was unthinkable. Our Lord always remained faithful to us precisely because anything else would be an act that "denied" His own nature and character As the prophet had said long ago: "Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, and faithfulness the belt of His waist" (Isa 11:5).[35]

Summary

Verse 13 is a remarkable (re)affirmation of the absolute security of every believer. Working in tandem with v 11, it serves as a bedrock verse in the Bible's doctrinal teaching concerning assurance that every believer will "live with Christ." Moreover, v 13 affirms the foundational truth that salvation is of the Lord. It is the work of God for man, rooted in the character of God Himself.

V. Conclusion

Faithfulness to Christ is vital in order that the believer might glorify God and bear much fruit. However, steadfastness for the Lord is not to be motivated by the mistaken idea that endurance is necessary to obtain, or to retain, eternal life and the assurance of future life with Christ. While there is a very real price to be paid for failure in the Christian experience, that price will never involve consignment to the lake of fire.[36]

Second Timothy 2:11-13 teaches the cardinal truth that the believer's assurance of eternal life, and ultimately, actual life in His presence, is the basis upon which he is to build a steadfastly faithful Christian life. Sadly, many in evangelical circles today teach just the opposite. They deny that a believer can have complete assurance of salvation until and unless he demonstrates consistent and ongoing faithfulness. This erroneous idea that faithfulness is the basis of assurance confuses grace and works, and actually undermines both assurance and faithfulness, because it insidiously works to weaken believers, not only theologically, but also psychologically.[37]

Designed to be both comforting *and* motivating, the passage begins (v 11) and ends (v 13) with definitive statements of assurance of future life with Christ for all believers.[38] Building on this absolutely assured status, v 12 seeks to motivate believers to a life of steadfast endurance with an offer and a warning. Believers should realize that faithful endurance on earth will result in special privilege in the future. Believers should also soberly understand that those who deny Christ's Lordship in their Christian experience will cause Christ to deny them reward.

The truths of this often misunderstood passage must be meticulously maintained in our thinking, living, witnessing, preaching, and teaching. Yes, all believers are secure in their basic relationship with Jesus Christ; they will definitely live with Him in the future. Yes, all believers will have their Christian lives evaluated and scrutinized. Those who have been steadfastly faithful will receive wonderful rewards and special prerogatives. Those who have been unfaithful will have such reward and prerogatives denied them. And yes, even the inconsistent, unfruitful believer remains secure in his basic relationship with the Lord. His security is based solely on the gracious, immutable faithfulness of Christ Himself. Man's works are not that upon

which his salvation depends. And yet his works as a Christian *will be evaluated*, and this evaluation will determine either the presentation or the denial of reward.[39] In short, 2 Tim 2:11-13 teaches that the believer in Christ is *secure yet scrutinized*!

VI. An Interpretive Paraphrase (2 Timothy 2:11-13)

This is an especially important statement:

> If we have died with Him (and every believer has)—then we will live with Him (in His presence after death/the Rapture).
>
> If we are faithful/endure for Him through the course of our lives—then we will also reign/govern with Him in His Kingdom.
>
> If we deny Him/are unfaithful to Him—then He will deny us the privilege of reigning/governing with Him.
>
> But even if we are unfaithful (forfeiting the privilege of reigning/ governing with Him)—
>
> Even then He remains faithful to us—we will live with Him—
>
> For He cannot deny Himself.

Endnotes:

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[1]John 3:16-18; 8:30; Rom 3:24; 6:23; Eph 2:8,9; Titus 3:5. Scripture references are from the New American Standard Bible.

[2]John 5:24; 6:39,40; 10:28,29; Rom 8:38,39; 1 John 5:9-13.

[3]Luke 14:26-29; Mark 8:34-38; John 8:31.

[4]Matt 19:27-30; Luke 19:11-27; 1 Cor 3:13-15; 9:24-27.

[5]Many commentators, noting the structure of the four parallel clauses of this passage, have suggested that they were in fact taken from a Christian hymn or well known saying of the day which Paul quotes here and specifically approves by this formal attestation. This is almost certainly correct. Kelly notes, "(The) parallel structure and rhythmic character (of vv 11-13) make it likely that they are an extract from a liturgical hymn, probably familiar to Timothy and the community (cf. 1 Tim 3:16 for the similar use of a hymn); the last (for he cannot…) which breaks away from the pattern, may be a gloss added by Paul himself. J.N.D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (reprinted., Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), 179.

[6]In a similar way, the Lord Jesus in the Gospels often verbally underscored particularly momentous utterances with the introductory "truly, truly" (amen, amen).

[7]This first conditional clause, like the other three to follow, is a first class condition in the Greek text. First class conditions present the if clause as a real supposition. This supposition is a grammatical convention and is not necessarily factually correct. (For a good discussion, see Maximilian Zerwick, *Biblical Greek*, trans. Joseph Smith, S. J. [Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1963], 102-104.) The point for our purposes here is that in all four clauses, if the first subclause is factually true then the second subclause (the apodosis—the "then" statement) will also obtain. Note: In the NASB the term "then" in the if/then clauses is not expressed but merely implied. However, it could be supplied by the reader consistent with the grammar of the four conditional clauses in Greek.

[8]Dana and Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of New Testament Greek*, 196.

[9]C. K. Barrett correctly notes "the definite past tense suggests a definite past event." *The Pastoral Epistles* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 104. Erdman erroneously interprets "death" in v 11 as a reference to actual physical martyrdom for Christ (*The Pastoral Epistles of Paul* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966], 113). Such an understanding ignores the definite past aspect of the aorist tense verb. Paul and Timothy had

"died with Christ" prior to Paul's penning of these words and it is to this past death that he refers. Respected commentators-such as Lock, Jeremias, White, and Guthrie agree that the death described here is a past event in the life of a believer related to the initiation of his Christian experience. Guthrie's comments are especially helpful, "The tense of the verb synapothnesko rendered 'be dead with him' is more correctly translated 'died with him' (RV), or 'have died with him' (RSV). A past event is undoubtedly in view; …the apostle is reminding himself and Timothy of that experience of identification with Christ which forms the basis of Christian living and hence of Christian courage and endurance." Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957), 145.

[10]The Greek first class condition can imply "since we have died with Him." This is basically how several translations render this portion, including RSV, the Jerusalem Bible, and the Williams Translation.

[11]This concept is fundamental to many of the exhortations of the Pauline Epistles. Paul frequently tells believers that they are not the persons they used to be before they trusted Christ. Therefore, they should not live the kind of lives they used to live, but rather they should now have a new lifestyle. See Rom 6:1-14 and Eph 4:1-3ff.

[12]Of course every believer receives eternal life as a present, abiding possession at the moment of faith in Christ ("He who believes in Me has eternal life" [John 6:47]). But the actual manifestation of this life in Christ's literal presence does not start until either physical death or the translation of the church (1 Thess 4:13-18; 1 Cor 15:51, 52). Scripture is God's Word. God cannot err. Therefore,

[13]Scripture is inerrant and individual portions of Scripture, accurately understood, cannot contradict one another.

[14]Zane C. Hodges notes regarding vv 11-13, "Much Christian truth is wrapped up in these pithy, memorable expressions. Very neatly they balance Christian certitudes with Christian responsibilities" (*Grace in Eclipse* [Dallas: Redención Viva, 1985], 68).

[15]Indeed, what believer can say with finality that he has attained perfection in his Christian life? Certainly Paul realized that he could not (Phil 3:12-14).

[16]This concept of the believer "saving his life" is highlighted in Matt 16:24-27. The word translated "life" is the Greek noun psyche. Psyche can mean "soul" or "life." In contexts dealing with requirements for rigorous discipleship, such as Matt 16:24-27, this concept has to do with the delivering of one's life from the temporal wrath of God against sin via an obedient, righteous submission to the Lordship of Christ. This same concept is central to the argument of the Epistle of James. For a helpful discussion of this phrase and its use in James, see Zane C. Hodges, *The Gospel Under Siege* (Dallas: Redención Viva, 1981), 23-27.

[17]For further explanation of the argument of the book of Hebrews and the meaning of the term metachoi in Hebrews see Zane C. Hodges, "Hebrews," *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*(Wheaton: Victor Books) 2:777-813.

[18]Lenski states that "'shall reign' exceeds 'shall live'" (*The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy and to Philemon* [Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1964], 794).

[19]William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 785.

[20]It is the position of this writer that the concept of rewards generally (and "reigning with Christ" specifically) has a millennial emphasis, although it appears quite possible that the believer's rewards and special prerogatives may well carry over into the eternal state (Rev 21:24).

[21]While the UBS text has the future form *arnesometha*, the vast majority of the extant manuscripts of the NT has the present tense form *arnoumetha*.

[22]*The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), s.v. "Deny" by H. G. Link and E. Tiedtke, 1:455.

[23]Ibid. It is true that they also say, "for denial is a rejection of God's offer of salvation and a conscious renunciation of the grace which has appeared" (1:455). But their conclusion in no way follows from the remarks cited in the text, and implies the possibility of losing one's salvation.

[24]See also Mark 14:31 which uses the related verb *aparneomai*

[25]This is illustrated in the cases of Peter and David. While Peter did deny his Lord in the tragic setting previously described, it is clear that this one major failure did not destroy the total faithfulness and fruitfulness of his life and ministry.

In a similar way David in a sense denied the Lord when he fell into a prolonged period of serious sin-including adultery and murder. And yet the Lord describes the overall course of David's life in glowing terms (2 Chr 7:17; 1 Kgs 9:4-5). And his life is posited by the Lord as the standard of faithfulness, by which the other kings are measured (1 Kgs 11:414:8; 15:3; 2 Kgs 16:2).

Thus while in a very real sense both David and Peter denied the Lord, the whole course of their lives would have to be described as faithful and enduring for the Lord.

[26]*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 107.

[27]Not only will the unfaithful/unfruitful believer be denied reward, but he will also be rebuked by the Lord (see Matt 25:26-27; Luke 19:22-24; 1 John 2:28; 3:3). For an excellent and balanced discussion of the negative side of the believer's judgment see "The Negative Aspects of the Christian's Judgment" by Samuel L. Hoyt in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 137 (1980)125-132.

[28]This same concept is seen in Luke 19:20-27 where the unfruitful/unfaithful servant is denied reward that other servants do receive. This servant is differentiated, however, from those who are not allowed to enter the Master's kingdom at all. The "enemies" of the Master (v 27), also referred to as citizens who hated the

Master (v 14), comprise those individuals who are slain at the advent of the Master. In contrast, all of the Master's servants have an audience with Him, and then enter the kingdom recompensed according to their faithfulness.

[29]See William Hendricksen, *Thessalonians, Timothy, and Titus* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), pp. 259-260; and John R. W. Stott, *Guard the Gospel* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 64.

[30]"The only ground for security is not man's faithfulness but God's, that is, God's faithfulness to his word, to his promises, and to himself. Some interpret this line differently, taking it as a direct continuation of the third line: if we are faithless, God keeps faith by denying us, and meting out to us the punishment that we deserve. But this interpretation is unsuitable to the context, and does not do justice to the Biblical conception of the faithfulness of God." C. K. Barrett, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 104.

[31]J. N. D. Kelly notes that "the aim of this fourth strophe is not, of course, to open the door to backsliding and apostasy, but rather to provide a balm for troubled consciences" (*A Commentary On the Pastoral Epistles* [reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981], 181).

[32]While this verb can simply mean "to refuse to believe" or "to disbelieve," it can also mean, and in this context does mean, "to be unfaithful." This is validated by the obvious wordplay in the Greek text between the "faithfulness" (pistos) of Christ in contrast to the potential "unfaithfulness" of believers. This meaning of the verb apisteo ("to be unfaithful") in 2 Tim 2:13 is validated by the major lexical tools: *Theological Dictionary of the Greek New Testament*, s.v. "pisteuo," by R. Bultmann (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968), 6:205; *The New international Dictionary of New Testament Theology* s.v, "Faith," by O. Michel, 1:594; *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, p. 84; J. H. Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (New York: American Book Company, 1889), 21.

"It is reasonable," White maintains, "to hold that the sense of apisteo in this place must be determined by the antithesis of pistos menei. Now pistos as applied to God, must mean faithful (Deut 7:9), one who 'keepeth truth for ever' (2 Col 1:18; 1 Thess 5:24; 2 Thess 3:3; Heb 10:23; 11:11). There is the same contrast in Rom

3:3 'shall their want of faith (*apistia*), make of none effect the faithfulness pistin) of God?' But while we render apistoumen, with RV 'are faithless,' we must remember that unreliability and disbelief in the truth were closely allied in St. Paul's conception of them." Newport J. D. White in *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, W. Robertson Nicoll, ed. 4:164 (reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979).

[33]Sophocles, *Antigone*, pp. 219, 318f; Xenophon, *Anabasis*, 2, 6, 19.

[34]Charles Haddon Spurgeon was fond of saying: "Three things God cannot do. He cannot die, he cannot lie, and he cannot be deceived…. These three impossibilities do not limit his power, but they magnify his majesty; for these would be infirmities, and infirmity can have no place in the infinite and ever blessed God. *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* (Pasadena, Texas: Pilgrim Publications, 1972), 25:32.

Specifically the Word of God states that God "cannot deny Himself" (2 Tim 2:13); He "cannot lie" (Titus 1:2); and He "cannot be tempted by evil" Jas 1:13). More generally it can be said that God cannot do anything that would violate His own character or essence.

[35]*Grace in Eclipse*, 68.

[36]The promise of John 3:16 that the one who believes in the Son will never perish is not a pledge that the believer will never die physically, but is an affirmation that he will never experience "the second death," i.e., "the lake of fire" (Rev 20:11-15; see also John 5:24; 10:28,29; Rom 8:1).

[37]Christian psychiatrist Frank Minirth states, "Just as parents usually accept their children and will have an innate love for them regardless of what they do, so God loves us. Although God does not always like our behavior, just as parents do not always like their children's behavior, there is a great difference between not accepting someone's behavior and not accepting them. Children still feel loved if parents do not accept their irresponsible behavior, but they feel rejected and discouraged if they feel that they themselves are rejected.

This type of rejection leads to discouragement, neurosis, and even psychosis. Likewise, Christians may become discouraged, neurotic, or even psychotic if they feel their receiving or keeping Christ is conditional." *Christian Psychiatry* (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1973), 41.

[38]Hodges describes "we shall live with Him" and "He remains faithful" in vv 11 and 13 as "two pillars of certainty." Between these two pillars, Hodges says, there are "two alternatives that (are) fully conditional" (i.e., in v 12), *Grace in Eclipse*, 68.

[39]Throughout the Bible, salvation from hell is presented as truly free, and vibrant discipleship is presented as truly costly. Compare Rom 3:21-24 with Rom 12:1, 2; Eph 2:8,9 with Eph 2 :10;Titus 3:5 with Titus 3:8 and 3:14; and Rev 22:17 with Luke 14:26,27.